

Sir,

I read your editorial on the mystery of evil in the last issue of this paper. It is commendable that you brought up this topic. While there are no satisfactory philosophical answers to the problem of evil; there abound theological answers to evil. For instance, the contributions of St. Augustine towards the formulation of a concrete Christian theodicy needs to be discussed. Later, within your religion, we have St. Thomas of Aquinas's long discussions on evil. It is important that we carry on what you have begun in the last editorial in this paper. Within my lineage of Tantra, which traces itself to Sage Vashishtha through to Baba Vamdeb to Shankari Baba to Baba Shital Prasad in an unbroken lineage of Guru-shishya Parampara, we too have tried to tackle the problem of evil in ways very different from Sri Adi Shankaracharya Bhagavadpada's, apophatic methods. The basic assumptions of my lineage/charism within Hinduism match with the Roman Catholic understanding of evil. In fact, this had prompted me to research Catholic Patristics and Catholic theodicy for my doctoral work. AI, for instance, poses a new threat to humanity with its ability to simulate friendships in a lonely and cooling world. We need to reread St. Augustine and the Church Fathers to combat this new form evil has taken. St. Thomas of Aquinas and Sri Abhinavagupta should be read synoptically; not St. Thomas Aquinas and Advaita Vedantins together as had been the norm. Evil is very real. Both Roman Catholicism and my lineage are certain about this.

I praise the efforts begun by Fr. Sunil Rosario in the last issue of this paper --- he has begun the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Bengal. This is important because his views as a diocesan priest will be less biased than any Catholic Religious' historiography since a Religious will naturally tend to highlight their own congregation. And Fr. Rosario is a Bengali. Plus, his age and experience over the decades puts him at a vantage point in charting the Roman Church's history thoroughly. Unless he continues to write here and expand these brief vignettes into longer online essays, something essential will be lost to Bengalis and the Church at large --- the truly Catholic nature of the Catholic Church in Bengal. It is a unique history which has been shaped by the worldviews of a Bengal which perhaps is lost forever. I hope Fr. Rosario will later define fully what is meant by the Church in Bengal. Is the hierarchical Church's history alone which needs mapping; if so, where would a person like I be situated? As a Tantric, when I write here and elsewhere I do not see Hinduism as being confined to normative Hindus alone. Those who help me in my ministry, are also anonymous Hindus. I urge Fr. Sunil to consider the fallibilist and process theology involved in constructing the idea of the Church in Bengal. Post humanism demands that we calibrate our theologies to accommodate religious pluralism. Both Roman Catholic and Tantric theologies are Prophetic theologies. They challenge the zeitgeist.

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